

342 A man may either select and cut the timber for his house himself, or
 313 make arrangements to have it done by his own village or a related village.
 If he cuts it himself, he fells the first suitable timber he sees for any part of
 the house and leaves it until he can get help to haul it to the house site. To
 [431] procure the help of a village he presents one or more whale's teeth or property
 such as mats and tapa to the ranking men of the village with his request.
 At the appointed time the necessary house posts are assigned to groups of men
 who select, fell, and transport them. The natives use imported metal ax
 blades, hafted like adzes, for felling timber. Long, heavy beams are carried
 on the shoulder. Hauling the timber takes two or more days, and during
 this time the owner provides the daily feast (*i nggaravi ni takathu ai vale*) for
 the workers.

342 The quantity of sennit needed for a house depends on the size of the
 283 house and the amount of ornamental lashing to be executed, but for even a
 small house a large quantity is necessary. An industrious man on Fulanga
 who was building a house 3.5 fathoms long, 2 fathoms and 2 spans wide, and
 about 3 fathoms high, estimated that he needed 6,000 fathoms of sennit. This
 he made in his leisure time, mainly in the evening. To complete such a task
 takes from six months to one year of steady work. Well-executed ornamental
 [555] lashing is very much admired by the natives and adds considerably to the
 owner's prestige. Frequently members of the owner's clan contribute sennit
 for the house.

342 After the timber has been hauled to the house site, it is shaped and
 smoothed (*sasau kathu*) by the owner or by the carpenter with metal bladed
 adzes of various sizes. Inasmuch as the Lauans take great pride in smooth,
 thick house posts this is slow, careful work.

When the parts of the main framework are ready to be erected, the sennit
 finished, and the harvest ripe, the day for erecting the main framework is set
 by the owner and the village headman, who announces it to the village. All
 the able-bodied men in the village help in the actual work. The old men,
 giving advice and telling stories, sit in a group under a temporary coconut-
 leaf thatched pavilion (*vakatu noloa*), near the house site. Properly, kava
 [272] should be provided by the owner; but on islands where kava is not raised it
 is often omitted.

On this first day of the actual house building the largest feast of the
 series is held. It is provided and prepared by the owner and his relatives.
 The men work on the ovens, and the women fish and boil the food. The
 women take no part in the actual house building. A small feast (*i takitaki*)
 is served in the morning at nine or ten o'clock. The main feast (*mangitichi ni
 kali vaka vale*) is served at four or five in the afternoon. It is distributed by
 the old men under the direction of the chief of the ceremonial ground or the